**Sierra Nevada Conservancy Grant Program**
**Safe Drinking Water, Water Quality and Supply, Flood Control,**
**River and Coastal Protection Act of 2006 (Proposition 84)**

**Subregion:** **REGIONWIDE** **County: EL DORADO**

**Applicant:** **GEORGETOWN DIVIDE RESOURCE CONSERVATION DISTRICT**

**Project Title:** **FISH FRIENDLY FARMING ENVIRONMENTAL CERTIFICATION PROGRAM**

**Reference Number:** **SNC 070260**

## PROJECT SCOPE

The Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District, in collaboration with the El Dorado County Agricultural Watershed Group and the California Land Stewardship Institute, proposes to address water quality impairments and toxicity levels in North Canyon Creek and Coon Hollow Creek in El Dorado County by implementing the Fish Friendly Farming Environmental Certification Program. This voluntary, incentive-based program would:

- Provide a series of eight (8) workshops educating landowners in current Beneficial Management Practices (BMPs) to reduce erosion, conserve water, increase native habitats, and enhance aquatic habitats on private farms and ranches;
- Provide technical assistance from erosion control specialists and restoration/revegetation professionals to landowners to complete Farm Conservation Plans utilizing BMPs;
- Apply Farm Conservation Plans with required implementation actions and timelines to receive environmental certification from the Regional Water Quality Control Board, El Dorado County Agricultural Commissioner, Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District, and the California Land Stewardship Institute.

The Fish Friendly Farming Environmental Certification Program:

- Provides landowners with technical assistance in creating restoration plans;
- Benefits wildlife and aquatic resources through restoration and revegetation activities;
- Assists landowners with meeting the California Water Resources Control Board's Irrigated Agricultural Lands Program requirements;
- Inventories and documents all existing and potential sediment sources, including natural features, concentrated flow sources, current chemical use, and irrigation practices.

Introduction of the Fish Friendly Farming Program to the 360-plus members of the El Dorado County Agricultural Watershed Group in 2007 revealed that potentially 4,800 acres of agricultural land could be enrolled in the program. As additional properties are enrolled in the Fish Friendly Farming program, benefits will accrue over entire watersheds, ensuring the protection of other streams and creeks, making this project a model for practices that could be applied in other Sub-Regions throughout the SNC area.

## PROJECT SCHEDULE

| **DETAILED PROJECT DELIVERABLES** | **TIMELINE** |
|---|---|
| Complete revised Fish Friendly Farming workbook | July – December 2008 |
| Schedule, conduct outreach, and advertise for 4 workshops in 2009<br>Schedule, conduct outreach, and advertise for 4 workshops in 2010 | October – December 2008<br>October – December 2009 |
| Conduct 4 workshops<br>Conduct 4 workshops | January – March 2009<br>January – March 2010 |
| Perform site visits on enrolled properties | April – September 2009 |
| Conduct certification | October – February 2010 |
| **Final Report/Final Payment Request** | **April 1, 2010** |

## PROJECT COSTS

| PROJECT BUDGET CATEGORIES | TOTAL SNC FUNDING |
|---|---|
| Outreach, materials development and overall project coordination | $55,680 |
| Operating expenses: Supplies, postage, education/outreach materials | $5,000 |
| Professional and consultant services: Conservation planning technical assistance (CLSI's Fish Friendly Farming program cost) | $222,800 |
| **GRAND TOTAL** | **$283,480** |

**Letters of Support:**

- none

**Recommendation:**

Staff recommends funding the requested amount of $283,480.

## Project Summary

The Georgetown Divide Resource Conservation District (RCD), in collaboration with the El Dorado County Agricultural Watershed Group (EDCAWG) and the California Land Stewardship Institute (CLSI), are seeking funding to address water quality exceedances and toxicity as identified through the Irrigated Lands Program (ILP) water quality monitoring within El Dorado County. The CLSI, the RCD and the EDCAWG propose to address these known exceedances through water quality monitoring, education and outreach focused on stewardship, and Conservation Planning Technical Assistance (CPTA). The stewardship and CPTA components of this strategy will be met through the implementation of the Fish Friendly Farming Environmental Certification Program (FFF) as administered by CLSI.

The FFF program is an incentive-based comprehensive program which incorporates a series of workshops, site assessment of individual farms by technical staff, and development of farm plans (including required implementation of Best Management Practices (BMPs)), followed by third-party regulatory certification and yearly photo monitoring. The FFF program strategy is to reduce erosion, conserve water, increase native habitats and enhance and protect aquatic habitats. In this manner, the FFF program addresses the numerous causes of water quality, and riparian and aquatic habitat problems in one comprehensive effort while providing EDCAWG members with documented evidence of ILP compliance.

The goal of this proposal is to reduce water quality exceedances and to ensure irrigated agricultural discharges meet water quality requirements through the following objectives:

1. Reduce or eliminate the discharge of polluted runoff from irrigated agricultural lands.
2. Develop a comprehensive program to implement management measures to provide long-term water quality benefits, and build advocacy for stewardship principles and sound watershed management.
3. Promote continued agricultural presence and working landscapes in the County by assisting in meeting the requirements of the ILP and protecting water quality in an economically feasible manner.
4. Establish a model that can be adapted for use in other watersheds.

The benefits of a comprehensive stewardship effort will provide irrigated agricultural communities with the knowledge, understanding, and tools necessary to make sound resource-based decisions. These decisions will ensure economical agricultural commodity production is balanced with conservation needs of protecting water quality and conserving natural resources.

Proposed Total Cost: $433,480.00